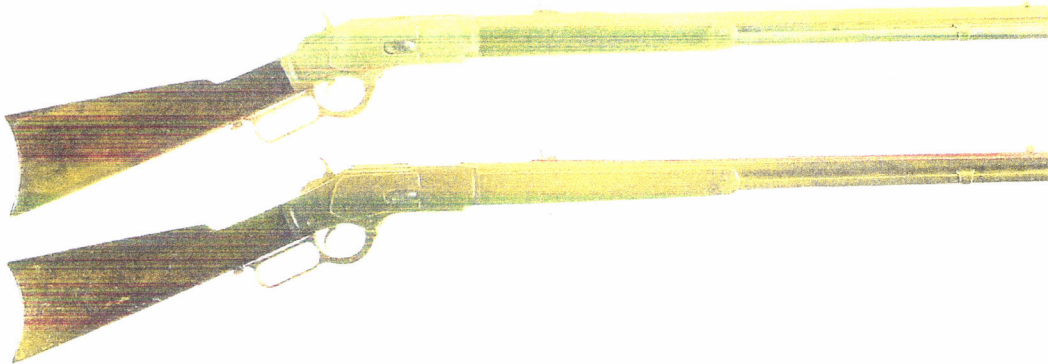


Testimony on HB 215
State Administration Committee
An Act Designating an Official State Historical Rifle for Montana



My name is Mac Minard and I live in Clancy, Montana. I rise in support of HB 215, a bill that would designate the Winchester Model 1873 as the Montana Historical Rifle.

Montana, like no other state in the Union, has a rich past steeped in frontier history and traditions that were part of the pioneer spirit and the Native American culture. As synonymous with the Montana Frontier as a good horse was the Winchester rifle that hung in the scabbard.

For the people who carved out a life on the plains or in the Rocky Mountains the Winchester rifle was a necessary tool for personal and family protection and for collecting game on which to sustain life in the land we now call Montana.

Winchester Repeating Arms Company produced some of the earliest and most popular repeating lever action rifles ever made. One of the most successful designs, and certainly the most famous, was the Winchester Model 1873. The first center-fire, steel frame rifle, built by Winchester, the Model 73 was originally chambered in 44-40 and were later produced in 32-40 and 32-20. The rifle variation used a 24" barrel, while the carbine used a 20" barrel. The carbine was the most popular due to its portability, as well as allowing its users to conveniently carry one type of ammunition for both their rifles and pistols.

Winchester rifles were readily available on the Montana frontier and became hugely popular, with over 720,000 produced. This popularity has led the Model 1873 to be *credited as* "The Gun that Won the West", and inspired the 1950 Western film [Winchester '73](#) starring [Jimmy Stewart](#) and directed by [Anthony Mann](#).

I suppose that asking a legislative body to adopt a state historical rifle would not be popular in some states. Not important work or Not politically correct some might say.

But then those folks don't live close to the land, and are not lucky enough to have the rich frontier heritage we do. So for them it may not fit but for Montana it is right as rain.

In celebration of our rich heritage and history I support HB 215 and encourage a DO Pass on this important legislation.